

Practical Approaches to PVO/NGO Capacity Building

Lessons from the Field

1. *Approaches for Capacity Building Programs*
2. *Activity Design and Development*
- 3. *Activity Monitoring for Sustainable Results***
4. *Financial Management*
5. *Institutional Development*

Senegal PVO/NGO Support Project
USAID Project #685-0284



Monographs by:



A Description of the Monograph Series

"Practical Approaches to PVO/NGO Capacity Building" is a five-monograph series, which is intended to help the program manager in identifying and supporting sustainable development activities while also building the capacity of implementing organizations - both at the community level as well as with the intermediary nongovernmental organization (NGO). It is based on the experiences of the New TransCentury Foundation Umbrella Support Unit (USU), managers of the USAID/Senegal PVO/NGO Support Project. NTF has been assisted by Yirawah International in providing international short-term technical assistance to the Project. The five monographs include:

1. Approaches for Capacity Building Programs
 2. Activity Design and Development (including rapid and participatory appraisal techniques, and logical framework)
 3. Activity Monitoring for Sustainable Results
 4. Financial Management (including financial analysis, budgeting, and financial systems and procedures)
 5. Institutional Development (including participatory institutional diagnosis, and institutional development plan)
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Acronyms & Terminology

CAT	Cross-Cutting Activities Team (at USAID/Senegal)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Committee
NRM	Natural Resource Management
The Project	The Senegal PVO/NGO Support Project
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USU	Umbrella Support Unit (managers of the Project)



1. Context of Activity Monitoring for Sustainable Results Monograph

1.1. Purpose of This Monograph Series

A series of five monographs has been developed to describe the key elements in instituting a comprehensive program of sustainable development which includes capacity building of the local institutions involved. The series is based on the methodologies and tools developed and/or modified by the managers of the USAID/Senegal-funded PVO/NGO Support Project, the New TransCentury Foundation's Umbrella Support Unit (USU).

Sustainable development is achieved when local institutions are able to strengthen their beneficiaries' ability and capacity to handle programs using their own "know how". USAID, through their reengineering activities, has reemphasized their commitment to development that is sustainable, as well as designed and implemented in a participatory fashion. There are, as a result, an increasing number of projects with the objective of increasing the organizational capacity of client groups, at the community level as well as with intermediary NGOs.

Definition

Capacity building programs are intended to strengthen an organization's ability to provide quality and effective services, while being viable as an institution. This means supporting an organization to be *programmatically* sustainable (providing needed and effective services), as well as *organizationally* (with strong leadership and having the necessary systems and procedures to manage by); while assuring that it has sufficient *resources* (human, financial and material) which are utilized well. Finally, this support must help the organization understand the external environment (political, economic, and social) it operates in, and to develop a relationship with it that is sufficiently stable and predictable.

1.2. Objectives of the Activity Monitoring for Sustainable Results Monograph

This monograph has four main objectives:

- to improve project impact through effective monitoring and evaluation;
- to describe the elements of a participatory monitoring approach;
- to demonstrate how to develop relevant indicators for stakeholders at every level; and
- to outline an approach to replicate donor-funded, project-oriented monitoring in on-going regional or national programs.

1.3. USU Approach to Program Management and the Role of Monitoring for Results

Program management is the system developed by an organization to successfully and effectively oversee its operations. There are five key elements which address the external environment; the organization's mission, plan and operations; as well as results of services provided. Information on each of these elements is obtained and analyzed to make decisions at the operational and strategic level of the organization. At the operational level, indicators are used to measure acceptable levels of efficiency and effectiveness and to identify problem areas in the program. At the strategic level, indicators are selected to determine near and long-term impacts of development activities.

The USU approach to activity monitoring considers both levels by addressing activity management and activity results and outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates these two aspects and the components of each. As depicted in the table, monitoring of activity management examines grants administration, the utilization of resources

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and the transfer of skills and/or knowledge to beneficiaries. Activity management looks internally into the NGO as an organization, examining its ability to manage the resources necessary for implementing an activity and for transferring these skills to participants of the activity. Reporting of results is done taking into consideration the external environment in which the activity is operating. In tracking activity management, the USU receives monthly financial and quarterly activity reports from grantees. In addition, the staff has frequent contact with NGO staff and makes periodic visits to activity sites. Through these means, the USU can assess the effectiveness of NGO activity management and help individual grantees improve their operations, thereby improving activity results and outcomes.

The monitoring of activity results/outcomes is subdivided into monitoring both the impact and sustainability of an activity. Monitoring impact, especially long-term results, has traditionally been the primary focus of the donor community and development organizations. The more recent emphasis by USAID of managing for results has shifted the focus to impact monitoring where results are measured in quantifiable terms at various stages in the execution of an activity.

As depicted in Figure 1, impact monitoring begins with the implementation of the activity by measuring such things as the number and types

of training programs, the number and gender of beneficiaries participating in each, as well as the acquisition of skills and knowledge through these efforts. Infrastructure, including kilometers of roads built and repaired, or irrigation canals constructed and number of wells drilled are also monitored at this base level.

The intermediate level of impact measurement examines the results from utilization of the training and infrastructure received. This may include the increase in agricultural production resulting from the introduction of an improved cultivar or the increased use of family planning methods after community awareness programs and training of community health workers.

The final level of impact is longer-term and targets improvements in a community resulting from a development activity such as higher incomes from the use of a new technology or improved health due to better sanitation practices recommended through development activities.

Indicators of sustainability often become identifiable later in the life of the development activity and can be more difficult to measure. Monitoring of sustainability examines the services and activities, systems and resources at the community level that can continue the development activities without NGO assistance. Components of this include assuring the viability

Figure 1: Components for Monitoring an Activity

Activity Management	Activity Results/Outcomes	
	Impact	Sustainability
* Grants administration	*Training/Infrastructure completed	*Viability of Management Committee
*Utilization of resources (Financial, human, material)	*Production, Utilization of better methods (technology, family planning)	*Viability of revolving fund
* Transfer skills/knowledge	*Higher incomes, better health	* Extended activities at village level

* Indicates components of the Activity Management and Results/Outcomes

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of community group management committees and revolving funds. Community group viability is measured by the management skills acquired and utilized which are necessary to continue the activity after the grant is completed. Extended activities implementation at the village level indicates an ability to innovate and to continue to improve their livelihood. Even with favorable impact results during the activity life, sustainable

development can not be assured without looking at these long-term viability concerns.

Implementing an effective monitoring and evaluation system that considers each of these aspects creates a challenge for development projects. In the case of Senegal, the Project staff continues to develop and modify its monitoring and evaluation system with the overall goal of improving program management both at the strategic and operational levels.

2. Methodology/Approach to Activity Monitoring for Results

2.1. Background and Adaptations to Activity Monitoring for Results

When the USAID PVO/NGO Support Project was started, the monitoring plan included training NGOs in activity monitoring, identifying a list of impact indicators with grantees through the development of their activity logical frameworks and making visits to activity sites during start-up followed by biannual monitoring visits thereafter. During site visits, Project staff would spend three to five days assisting NGOs to develop sampling plans and collect data needed for activity monitoring. NGOs also provided the USU with quarterly monitoring results that compared targeted with actual results.

By 1996, the initial monitoring plan needed modifications for two reasons. First of all, it was felt that there was insufficient and inadequate monitoring of activities by many NGOs and the site visit scheme. As a result, activities with implementation problems were not being identified soon enough for effective corrective action. Secondly, the system needed to be adapted to meet the changing needs of USAID for results package information. Consequently, the USU was asked to take a more proactive role in activity monitoring by increasing the frequency and time spent during site visits and

assisting NGOs to more accurately report results.

Under the existing approach, eight Project staff members were available to monitor the sites for 35 grants. This staff was given the mission was to determine what changes needed to be made to improve the system. In February 1996, the staff began collecting data at all sites of grantee-funded activities to facilitate comparisons among projects. These assessments initially used the same survey instruments as in the past, but the staff began revising the forms in the field. Below are some of the initial findings from the assessments:

- NGO resources for monitoring were limited in number and expertise in the field
- Verifying NGO data, such as depth of wells and production levels, was difficult
- Revolving funds were not adequately checked by Project staff
- The survey instrument was the same for all types of activities, thus providing insufficient information
- Data analysis did not match the logical framework of various grants
- Report analysis required synthesis, however USU departments were generating individual reports, not the field team
- USU was not really analyzing NGO reports, due to workload and time constraints

- USU management needed to be more involved, especially in overall planning, implementing and analysis

Given these constraints, the USU identified some key issues that needed to be considered in the new approach. Firstly, an adequate work load must be determined. How many activities can a USU staff member realistically manage and monitor? Who else, besides staff members, can be used to handle the remaining activities? Secondly, USAID's managing for results leads to all activity participants being evaluated by the results at the village level. This emphasizes the fact that results are not under either the Project's or NGO's direct control, but that support and motivation of the community groups is. Thirdly, producing effective results in the future requires clarifying the roles and behavioral motivation of all stakeholders (including USAID, NPC, USU, NGOs and beneficiaries). Lastly, conditions leading to a motivating environment needed to be fostered.

Based on these issues, representatives from USAID, NPC, USU and the NGOs met to discuss a strategy for improving the monitoring system. Efforts were made to review weaknesses

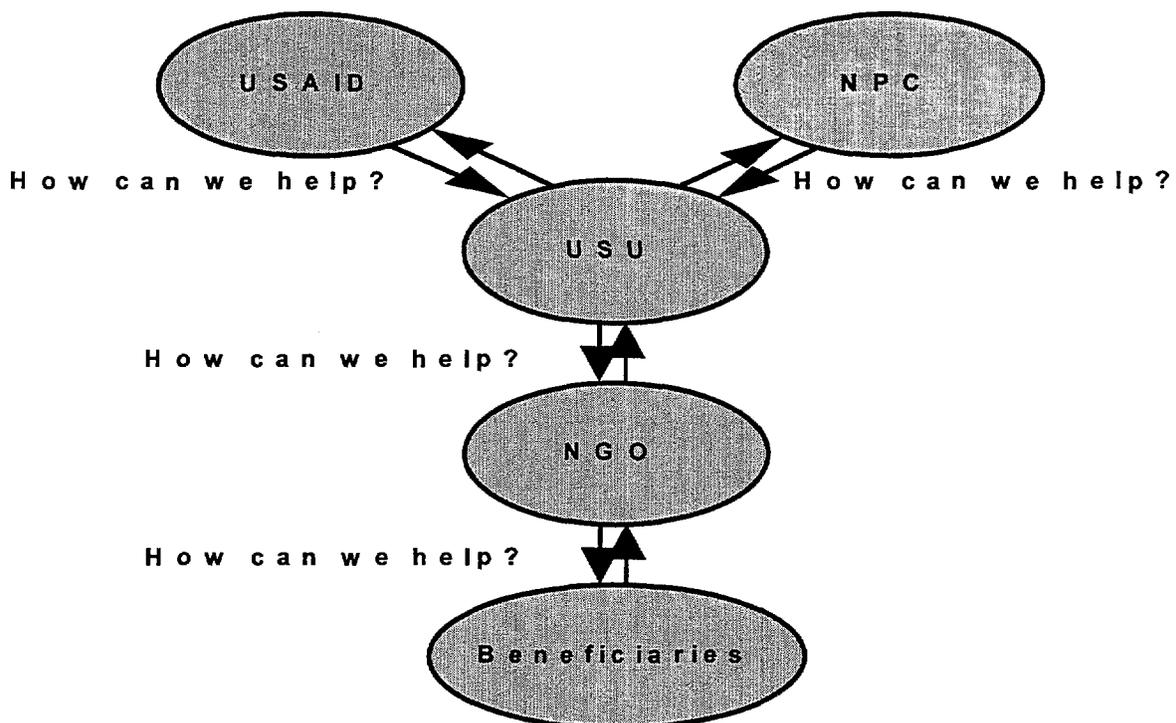
in the existing approach and to make modifications that would clarify the responsibilities of all key stakeholders. During discussions, discrepancies were found in the presumed roles and responsibilities among stakeholders, some of which are still to be completely resolved. This review also looked at what factors were necessary for motivating people in the workplace. The greatest difficulties were found to be lack of direction and lack of feedback; in other words, poor communication.

Given the findings from the field assessment and conclusions from the stakeholder's meeting, a new approach was developed to emphasize communication and a process of motivation that is not punitive in its approach, although it will include punitive action if needed.

2.2. Principal Aspects of the New Approach

The USU's new approach to activity monitoring for sustainable results focuses on how to better assist NGOs improve the performance of development activities. The key question to be asked is "how can we help?". This has led to a schedule of more frequent visits and improved

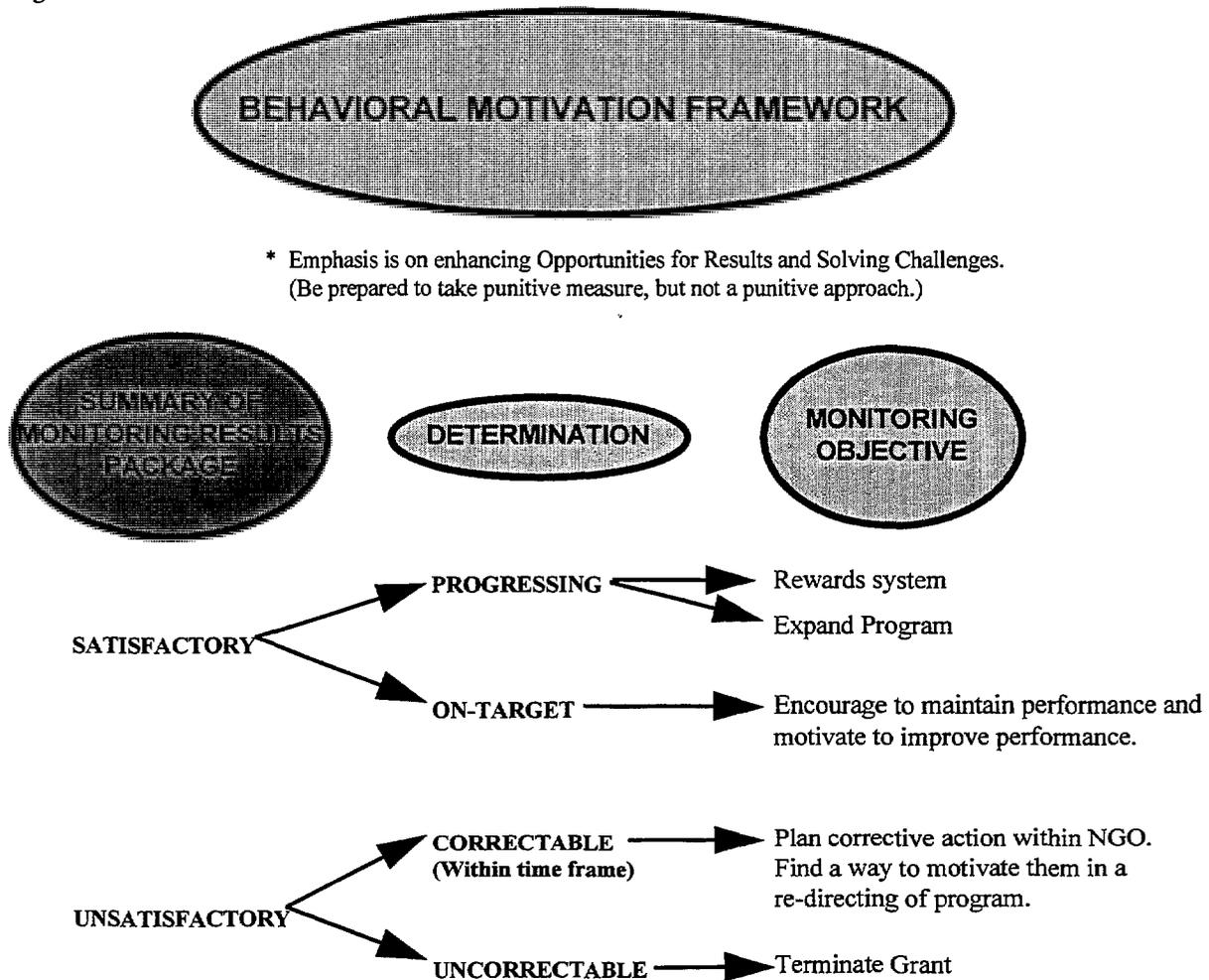
Figure 2: Organizational Chart of Monitoring Assistance



communication channels between the beneficiary communities, NGOs and external stakeholders. In order to implement such an approach, the USU is establishing an advocate program which utilizes staff complemented by NPC, USAID and ministry staff who adopt an NGO program. Those programs with high technical content are paired with USU staff with the relevant technical experience and expertise to provide support. Advocates are limited to no more than two NGO development activities to assure they have adequate time to offer continual assistance.

Stakeholder Participation: Figure 2 is an organizational chart that illustrates that all stakeholders, from beneficiaries to the NPC, work together to monitor activity performance. These interventions include identifying what critical skills are necessary for activity implementation, outlining the special achievements during a given period, determining the strengths and weaknesses of activities, summarizing what goals or objectives are not being met and suggesting changes that can be made in the current plans to improve performance.

Figure 3: Behavioral Motivation Framework



Monitoring Needs of all Participants

Considered: One of the greatest strengths of this approach is that it considers not only the donor's need for monitoring activity performance, but also examines more actively the needs of the NGO and community groups to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their programs. The USU works with individual NGOs to develop performance indicators that will be relevant at the community level as well as for grant sponsors. In this way, all stakeholders will receive the information needed to monitor activity management and assess activity results.

Behavioral Motivation: Another key aspect of the new monitoring for results approach is that it follows a behavioral motivation framework which emphasizes feedback on the opportunities for improving and resolving constraints identified during the review process. Figure 3 depicts the range of monitoring actions to be taken based on the results of an assessment of an activity's progress. Activities making satisfactory progress on schedule are rewarded for achieving anticipated intermediate results. At the other extreme, activities that perform unsatisfactorily with uncorrectable actions will be terminated. Caution must always be taken to

identify realistic performance indicators so that results can be achievable. Therefore, periodic review of performance indicators in light of external environmental changes must be made.

Shift from Departmental to Functional Support Role: Monitoring support to NGO activities was traditionally provided by one of the three departments within the USU: Grants Management, Finance/Administration, or Institutional Development and Training. As a result, activity monitoring sometimes lacked cohesion and overall vision since each department tended to operate individually. Internal departmental communication was not always effective, which made activity performance measurement difficult. To address these constraints, two cross-functional teams were created for most monitoring activities: one addressing grants management accountability and the second focusing on activity results reporting. Departments still exist; however, the role of the department head is to make sure team members from the department have what is needed to function properly in their team assignments. In other words, the USU is now working on cross-functional teams, using the technical resources of the departments.

3. Key Elements of Activity Monitoring Results

This section describes the key elements necessary for an activity monitoring system based on field experiences and lessons learned by the Project. Implementation of the new approach to monitoring for results requires frequent visits to activity sites; sufficient human, financial and material resources; a strong advocate support system; development of well-defined indicators, and a clear reporting and information feedback system of activity results. Additionally, the new approach provides both monitoring support and technical assistance to the NGO and their

community group participants as well as documenting activity impact results.

3.1. Frequency and Content of Monitoring Visits

The USU has modified the frequency and content of monitoring visits to provide additional support to NGOs and beneficiaries as illustrated in Table 1. New grantees are visited within the first three months of activity startup. Formerly, these visits were restricted to three days, but now

they usually take up to five days or longer to ensure that there is sufficient time to visits all of the NGOs activity sites. During the visits, Project staff conduct environmental, economic and political analyses of activities and verify if the NGO's management, accounting and revolving fund systems are properly installed. Discussions with beneficiaries are also held to assure the acceptance and buy-in of the changes to the activity that may have been made during

the final stages of funding negotiation. Under the new approach, USU now also plans to more systematically document baseline conditions for each activity during the initial visit. Following start-up and throughout the life of the grant, the USU continues to make site visits to assist NGOs in monitoring their development activities. During the first few years of the Project, three to five day visits were made bi-annually to each activity to provide monitoring support on

Table 1: Comparison of the Frequency of Monitoring Visits

Former Approach	New Approach
Start-up Visits (during the activity initiation phase)	
In the first 3 months after start-up of each activity	In the first 3 months after start up of all activities
Environmental analysis of the activity	Environmental analysis of the activity
On a sampling of sites for 3 days	On all sites/ for the time period necessary
Discussion with the beneficiaries to assure their acceptance/buy-in to the changes made during the finalization of the funded activity	Discussion with beneficiaries to assure their acceptance-buy-in to the changes made during the finalization of the funded activity
Verification of the installation of management systems and procedures for managing the activity (accounting, management of revolving funds)	Verification of the installation of management systems and procedures for managing the activity (accounting, management of revolving funds) Document baseline conditions for the activity (the beneficiaries and their environment)
Other financial, technical and organizational aspects	Other financial, technical and organizational aspects
4 Visits/Year for Newly Implemented Activities & Activities not Progressing as Scheduled and 3 Visits/Year for those NGO Activities Progressing on Schedule	
Not previously done	For activities past their startup phase
	To assess implementation status of planned activities
	On a selected sample of sites based on analyzing the conclusions from the initial visit to all sites
	Can last 5 or 10 days depending on the number of sites and groups to be visited
	Technical assistance provided during the visits
Semiannual Visits	
For each activity	No longer being done
On a sample of sites or groups chosen with the NGO depending on the types of activities implemented	
For a period of 3 to 5 days depending on the type of activity and the location of the sites	
Includes technical, financial and organizational aspects	

financial, organizational and technical aspects. A sampling of sites and group visits with beneficiaries was made to determine if targets were being met.

Under the new approach, the frequency of these visits has been increased (see Table 1). The USU now conducts quarterly visits to newly implemented activities and those NGO activities not progressing on schedule. For NGOs who are progressing on or ahead of schedule, monitoring visits are planned three times a year. During these visits, Project staff works with the NGO to assess the implementation status of planned activities using a selected sample of sites. Technical assistance is also provided, as needed. The length of these visits is now nearly twice as long as in the former approach, with staff now

spend from five to ten days depending on the number of sites and visits planned with community groups

Table 2 shows the content of the site visits. For each sponsored activity, Project and NGO staff work together to measure the results achieved since the NGO's last reporting period and the impact of activities. This is usually done annually for each site depending on the type of activity monitored. The USU staff also assess the level of transfer to community groups of knowledge and from the NGOs. On all sites and groups covered by each NGO activity, the USU monitors financial, technical and organizational status. This information is collected annually over a seven to ten day period for each grant, using sampling techniques.

Table 2: Monitoring for Results

For each activity financed	To measure the results achieved during the previous period (usually in a given year) and their impact
	Access the level of transfer of knowledge to beneficiaries
All the sites and groups are covered by each NGO activity	Include financial, technical and organizational aspects
	Lasting 7 to 10 days depending on the number of sites
	Utilizing external resources to conduct the assessment
	Information collected using sampling

Question: Is USU's role to intervene or assist NGOs with activity monitoring?

Response: It can be either, depending on the situation.

Case No. 1 (Assistance): An NGO, whose grant ended in May 1996, completed at least 95 percent of its planned activities. Additionally, it succeeded in implementing many other activities that were not programmed. In this case, the USU assumed more of an assistance role in designing monitoring schemes that were continued after the grant ended.

Case No. 2 (Intervention): Another NGO was implementing an activity that required the contribution of beneficiaries to dig a canal to bring river water for irrigating vegetable gardens. After 12 months, no progress had been made on digging the canal. A special USU monitoring team gave the NGOs and beneficiaries a date by which the work on the canal must be completed, or financing would be halted. Ten days later, the beneficiaries had completed the work. The overall activity is continuing.

3.2 Advocate Support System

The backbone of the new approach to monitoring for results is developing an improved system of communication and responsibility among stakeholders. One of the actions taken to accomplish this goal is the “adopt an NGO” advocate program. This program, whose design was initiated by the USU in May 1996, encourages stakeholders to become advocates for NGO development activities. Under the program, personnel in the USU, NPC and USAID each select an NGO grantee for which they will be responsible. The role of the advocate is to motivate, coach, model, teach and assist the NGOs to solve problems encountered. Advocates do not necessarily provide technical expertise to their adopted NGOs, but rather can assist organizations in locating the necessary resources. The advocate is a key part of the

overall monitoring team for each NGO activity.

Although the advocacy program is still in its design phase, a preliminary list of responsibilities for the USU vis-a-vis the NGO and the NGO vis-a-vis the beneficiaries has been drafted which is presented in Table 3. The advocate’s specific tasks are outlined in the lower half of the table.

As the design has progressed, several issues have been identified which are being addressed before the program’s implementation. These include determining the criteria for matching the NGO and advocate supporter, the number and content of advocate visits per year to the activity site in relation to the overall USU monitoring visit schema, and a means of evaluating each advocate’s effectiveness. The advocacy program has a great potential for increasing the involvement and communication channels among stakeholders which, in turn, can improve project results.

Table 3: Advocate Responsibilities and Tasks

Responsibility of USU vis-a-vis the NGO and the NGO vis-a-vis the beneficiaries:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the principal areas of responsibility for each stakeholder • Identify the areas where results can be produced • Identify the improvement areas and specific tasks to accomplish in order to obtain the results • Assist in the planning of future realistic objectives to achieve
Specific Tasks of the Advocate are to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get to know NGO and people in NGO related to the activity • help the NGO to resolve challenges and help them with motivation at the community level (develop a productive work environment) • look at activity and understand how it relates to USAID results packages • review essential conditions for effective monitoring, identifying key constraints, areas for improvement, specific tasks to do it with dates • help in planning realistic future objectives • assure that accomplishments are noted by all stakeholders • help to design reward system; celebrate interim results • show progress graphically and visually in the village • know what is happening on similar projects, what’s working and how to help teach

3.3 Resources Needed for Monitoring for Results

An effective activity monitoring system can not be achieved without adequate human, financial and material resources. In the past, development organizations have striven to measure activity impact and sustainability, but they often failed to adequately consider these resource requirements. Just as with the implementation of any development activity, the accuracy and relevancy of information collected, analyzed and reported is directly related to the quality and quantity of resources used. In a monitoring system, the USU addresses resource requirements at both the Project and NGO level.

Human Resources: There are two important human resource questions to consider when developing a monitoring for results system. First of all, what are the technical skills and qualifications needed by those who monitor activities? Secondly, based on the number of grants, activities types and participating groups, how many people are needed to carry out the monitoring plan?

The Project is responsible for overseeing a large number of grants. Table 4 illustrates the status and breakdown of grants managed by the Project by sector and number of beneficiaries. It is clear that a broad expertise is required to monitor integrated activities which include health, credit, and agricultural and natural resource management sectors. Additionally, financial, managerial and organizational monitoring expertise is necessary. To address

these needs, monitoring teams of three or more people are assembled to regularly visit NGO activity sites. Local consultants with socio-economic backgrounds are often utilized as part of these teams to provide additional support to NGOs. The number of community groups involved with the Project clearly show the necessity for a sampling framework in monitoring activity results.

At the activity level, NGOs use technical and management specialists on their staff to collect and analyze information on activity progress. During monitoring visits, monitoring teams work with these people to review the NGO's monitoring system and results, to provide technical assistance if needed and to visit activity sites.

Financial Resources: Successful activity monitoring systems requires financial resources. In the past, many development organizations failed to account for monitoring costs in their annual budgets. Today, many experts suggest that between five and ten percent of an activity budget should be designated for financing monitoring activities. These funds must cover such costs as travel and per diem of monitoring staff, designing the monitoring system, developing monitoring forms and collecting information, training staff in the implementation of the system, conducting baseline studies, analyzing and reporting findings as well as the costs associated with the equipment for gathering the required data. The USU works with NGOs to assure that these costs are included in activity budgets.

Table 4: USU Grant Status as of 6/96

Status of Grants 6/96	Sectors Covered			# of Beneficiaries		
	Aq/NRM	Credit	Health	# Groups	# Women	# Men
5 Completed	4	2	1	111	2,398	999
3 Closed	3	-	1	324	2,921	1,947
18 Active	13	6	3	176	24,464	14,957
26 Total	20	8	5	611	29,738	17,903

Note: 5-10 additional grants to be awarded

Material and Equipment Resources:
Materials and equipment needs include office supplies at both the USU and NGO level, as well as equipment for the office and field. Field equipment not only includes instruments for measuring progress (such as infant weighing scales or compasses and calculators for measuring field sizes and crop yields), but also the transportation needed to visit the activity sites and to stay in the field.

3.4. Essential Conditions for Monitoring Activities

Table 5 lists the key questions the advocate working needs to answer when monitoring an activity with the NGO, community and other monitoring team members. The logic behind this list of questions is to help activity stakeholders take a broader view of the development activity and to determine if the overall strategy and vision are being met. It also provides the basis for a diagnostic tool to brainstorm potential solutions for overcoming constraints to achieving activity objectives. By including members from the community and the NGO, as well as the monitoring team, it becomes easier to reach a consensus that is acceptable to all stakeholders. These reconnaissance sessions are important during project start-up as well as during annual reviews of activity performance.

3.5 Identification and Use of Indicators

One of the greatest challenges of activity monitoring is developing appropriate indicators for program management. Traditionally, these indicators have been linked to a relatively defined advancing scale of development. For example: in rural economies, development activities typically have concentrated on moving the agriculture sector into small and medium-sized industry with the objective of achieving higher incomes and less unemployment.

The new approach is not based on a predetermined definition of advancement. USAID results packages address "improvement" and "increase" in defining indicators, but typically do not specify a numerical target. The target, which one monitors, is to be mutually agreed upon by stakeholders. Creative cooperation, requiring the participation of all stakeholders, means that targets may not be assigned from outside, but only within the understanding of the resources available.

Through reengineering, USAID has worked at the country level to identify indicators that can determine if desired results from their programs are being met. Figure 4 depicts a portion of the results package developed by USAID/Senegal that is particularly relevant to the Project. At the highest level, the mission's goal is increased private sector revenues from

Table 5: Necessary Reconnaissance at the Activity Site Level in Monitoring for Results

Key Questions to Consider:
1. What are the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain the desired results?
2. What are the specific results achieved since the previous review?
3. What are the positive and negative aspects about the activity?
4. What are the objectives that were not achieved/reached?
5. How can the NGO (USU/USAID) help the group?
6. Is there something beneficiaries or NGOs (USU/USAID) are doing that impede reaching desired results?
7. How can performance be improved?
8. Is supplementary training or experience needed?
9. What was done to assure increased ownership and involvement of the community/group?
10. What are the objectives to adopt for the upcoming period and what objectives should be eliminated?

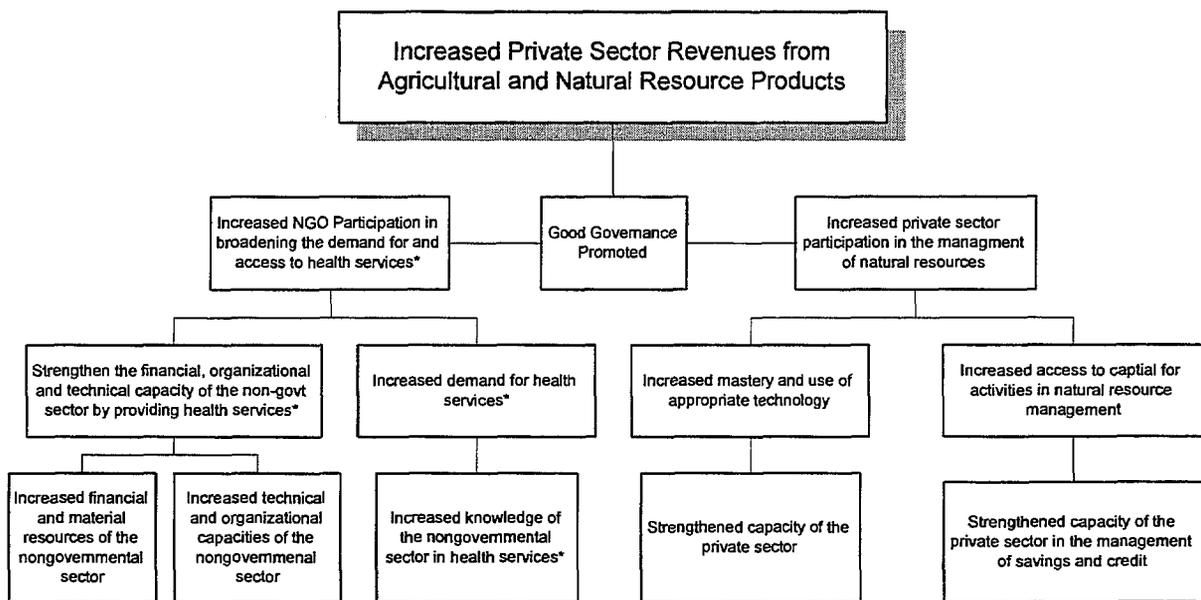
agricultural and natural resource products. Subsequent levels show more specific results that must be accomplished to reach this ultimate goal.

The USU's challenge is to work with NGOs to establish indicators that are mutually beneficial in measuring results in ways that are relevant to all levels of Project stakeholders. The USU, grantees and the other Project stakeholders work together to identify indicators at the activity level and track their results. Since the beginning of the Project, the USU has trained NGOs on how to identify indicators

through the development of logical frameworks.

Over time, this support has become more systematic by categorizing the types of indicators relevant to different types of development activities. A list of typical indicators used for program management is presented in Table 6. The table relates to Figure 1 by organizing indicators by categories of activity management and activity results. It also is related to Figure 4 by establishing linkages with the USAID/Senegal's country health and NRM strategic objectives.

Figure 4: Results Package of Cross-Cutting Activities Team (CAT) Relevant to Project



* Health services = maternal health, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS awareness programs source: USAID/Senegal draft of Results Package Report

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Table 6: USU Program Management Indicators

Activity Management	
Components	Indicators
Grants Administration	-Timely, accurate reporting and documentation; meets donor reporting requirements.
Utilization of Resources	-Implementation plan status -Budget status -Availability of qualified staff
Transfer Skills/Knowledge	-Ability to access external human resources -Type, breadth of technical and training expertise -Activity results

Activity Results Outcomes	
Components	Indicators
IMPACT	
Program Reach	-#/types of groups involved -# participants (by gender)
Acquisition	-#/% persons (by gender) attaining, improving literacy level -#/% persons (by gender) demonstrating increased knowledge in: 1. Improved agricultural practices (organic farming, fertilizer use, improved seeds) 2. Improved NRM practices (reforestation, natural fencing...) 3. Credit and savings programs operating 4. Improved health practices (family planning methods, nutrition...) -#/%/capacity of equipment, other infrastructure installed: 1. Wells, pumps, irrigation systems 2. Trees, including fruit, fencing 3. Grain mills, improved cooking stoves 4. Warehouse, health center, other buildings 5. Improved seeds, medical supplies 6. Credit availability
Utilization	-Increased production through improved practices -Increased #/% of trees, animals living -Credit repayment and savings rate -Increased use of potable water -Increased family nutrition level -#/%/frequency of visits to health center, vaccinations received, contraceptive usage
Change	-Increased income (individual, family, group) -Increased employment (youth...etc) -Increased disposable time (women...etc) -Decreased rate of illness, malnutrition, infant/mother deaths)
SUSTAINABILITY	
Management Committee	-Self management of activities (accessing external expert resources as required; applying good practices) -Legal groups formed (association, GIE, village groups) -Management structure, systems, documentation -Maintenance, repair of equipment -New activities started
Revolving Fund	-Credit/savings status -Reinvestment practices -Accounting current, accurate
Extended activities at village level	-Activities still operational and achieving targets after completion of grant -New activities successfully implemented

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Activity management indicators look internally into the NGOs operations, providing a basis for how well the NGO is managing the grant, utilizing resources and transferring skills and knowledge to the community level. This information is particularly useful for the NGO itself as well as the Project because the successful management of resources and transfer of skills are the basis for achieving results in development activities. These management indicators tend to be early indicators of success which can later lead to longer term impact and sustainability.

Activity results indicators are subdivided into those that address impact and those that demonstrate the sustainability of activities. Impact indicators have been chosen to identify results throughout the life of a development activity. Program reach shows the number of beneficiaries participating in development activities. Acquisition of knowledge or skills, goods, services and equipment is the next phase of impact. The utilization of these development tools is the next indication of impact. This is followed by change at the community level which demonstrates the highest level of activity impact. Indicators at the change level, such as increased income and employment, are those that most interest project funders and are those which typically take the longest time to be seen.

The USU has also chosen an approach that looks not only at the overall, but also at the equitable impact of development activities in a community. For example, increased income indicators at the change level are disaggregated by group, family and finally the individual. Likewise the difference in impact on time-savings technologies between men and women is also examined. This way, the project can more easily determine the types of activities that are the most effective in benefitting certain segments of the population.

The final type of indicator outlined in Table 6 are those that measure sustainability. These indicators show the organizational, financial and managerial systems that are in place

to carry on the development activity after the grant is completed. There are three components of indicators for sustainability: management committees, revolving fund schemes and extended activities at the village level. All of these components are very important to assure the continual success of the development activity although they are not always as easily quantified as impact indicators.

Activity management and activity results and outcomes are contingent on the external environment in which the development activity operates. Externalities such as floods, funding reductions, or political upheavals can greatly affect the desired results. Therefore, adjustments in indicators are important to consider when and if such conditions arise.

Question: How does the USU assist NGOs in choosing targets and indicators?

When designing a logical framework, NGOs often choose objectives and targets that are too ambitious or unworkable. Consequently, activities' results may fall short of expectations, even if the results achieved are favorable. For example, one of the NGOs working with the USU, selected a 70 tons per annum increase in vegetable production as a target for one of their agricultural extension programs. At the end of the grant assistance, cumulative production at the site had not yet reached 20 tons. This increase in production, however, was still a major achievement. With its five years of experience in monitoring, USU now has the capacity to help NGOs develop more realistic results targets. Through redimensioning during the final awarding process of a grant, USU reviews NGO's proposed indicators and, if needed, helps them to redo their logical framework designs to avoid choosing unrealistic indicators and targets.

3.6. Monitoring Reports

A clear and comprehensive reporting format facilitates analysis and reporting of activity results. One of the challenges is to develop a format that captures essential information on an activity's progress while being easily completed by staff during monitoring visits. The USU currently uses formats to record information at the NGO and community level that includes up to 10 pages of tables and require several hours to complete. Consequently, the USU is now redesigning their monitoring report format to reduce the length while targeting the most essential information for reporting purposes.

Although the new format is still being developed, Table 7 outlines the key elements which include results compared to the impact and sustainability indicators for each activity, success stories and observations on the difficulties and constraints during the reporting period. Summary recommendations and next steps agreed to will also be included to assure easier follow up during the next monitoring visit.

Before the new format is adopted by the USU, it is being field-tested to insure that it is easily completed by staff. The information contained in these reports will ultimately be used for analysis and feedback purposes.

Table 7: Elements to Include in a Monitoring Report

1. Grantee:		
2. Location(s):		
3. Date:		
4. Purpose Of the Monitoring:		
5. Results:		
	Indicator	Status
<u>Impact</u>		
output		
acquisition		
utilization		
change		
<u>Sustainability</u>		
programmatic		
organizational		
financial		
6. Success Stories		
7. Observations (including difficulties and constraints)		
8. Conclusions/recommendations-needed Actions		
9. Signatures (of persons who prepared and reviewed)		

3.7. Analysis/Feedback of Findings at the Program and Activity Level

The ultimate objective of monitoring activity results is to analyze and provide feedback to participants on activity performance. To accomplish this, Project staff extracts and analyzes information from monitoring reports. These results are presently being compiled, but they have not yet been input into a computerized information management system. A consultant will develop a "Results Tracking System" this year which will electronically store all monitoring data on activities for more detailed analysis.

The USU takes the results of the monitoring visits to give feedback to activity stakeholders. The behavioral motivation framework approach depicted in Figure 3, illustrates how this feedback is given to NGOs. Those organizations that have achieved their activities' targeted goals are encouraged to continue their good performance through a rewards system. This includes helping to communicate the results to other stakeholders and interested parties. Those NGOs whose performance is not satisfactory are first given assistance to improve their results in the following reporting period. This approach encourages NGOs to develop and utilize their own internal monitoring system to analyze and improve the performance of their development activities.

4. Conclusions

There are many elements that should be included in a monitoring for sustainable results package. First of all, the participation and monitoring needs of all stakeholders must be considered. It is also crucial to devise a behavioral motivation system to set rewards for those who are successful in achieving activity targets and corrective actions for those activities that do not meet expectations.

Second, monitoring of development activities requires project managers to make frequent site visits to provide support the local implementors in monitoring, using and communicating the results of these assessments. This is particularly critical during the start up phase of activity implementation. Thereafter, at least three or four visits should be made annually to NGO sites to assist with activity monitoring.

Third, project managers must provide adequate resources to activity monitoring. Without sufficient human, financial and material resources, the system can not function properly and therefore will not provide reliable results. Today, many experts suggest that between five

and ten percent of an activity budget should be designated to financing monitoring for results activities.

Fourth, advocate programs that encourage stakeholders "up the chain" to adopt an NGO can help to strengthen monitoring programs and improve communication channels among project participants.

Fifth, the selection and use of activity management, impact and sustainability indicators allow stakeholders to measure different aspects of activity performance at different levels of implementation. Although impact indicators are frequently used in measuring performance, projects should also include measures of activity management and activity sustainability in their monitoring for results packages. It is also important to determine the impact of development activities on different segments of the community such as women, children and families so that the project can more easily determine the types of activities that are the most effective in benefitting these target groups.

Finally, a good monitoring for results system requires a clear and comprehensive reporting format that will not be too laborious to complete. A computer system, such as a database or spreadsheet program to store and manipulate data will also facilitate during the analysis stage. A feedback mechanism allows stakeholders the ability to take appropriate actions to either

reward for achieving desired targets or to take corrective measures if targets fall short of expectations.

A thorough monitoring for results program may require additional human, financial and equipment resources. However, the improved results from such a system will lead to more effective development activities.

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Published 10/96

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